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## 3 School education

This chapter focuses on the performance information — efficiency, effectiveness, access and equity — for government funded school education in Australia. Reporting relates to government funding only, not to the full cost to the community of providing school education. Descriptive information and performance indicators are generally available for:

- government primary and secondary schools;
- non-government primary and secondary schools; and
- school education as a whole (government and non-government primary and secondary schools).

Schooling aims to provide education for all young people. The main purposes of school education are to assist students in:

- developing their talents, capacities, self-confidence, self-esteem and respect for others;
- attaining knowledge, skills and understanding in key learning areas; and
- developing their capacity to contribute to Australia’s social, cultural and economic development.

This year, the Report has been enhanced to include:

- nationally comparable learning outcomes for year 5 reading benchmark results using 1999 data; and
- improved reporting on the performance of Indigenous students.

Following a discussion of the profile of school education in Australia in section 3.1, recent policy developments are discussed in section 3.2. These two sections provide the context for the assessment of performance indicators in the subsequent sections. Section 3.3 includes the framework of performance indicators for school education and section 3.4 presents and discusses the available data relating to this framework. Section 3.5 discusses future directions in the development and reporting of performance indicators for school education. The chapter concludes with jurisdictions’ comments in section 3.6 and definitions of terms in section 3.7.

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## *Supporting tables*

Supporting tables for chapter 3 are provided on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report. The files are provided in Microsoft Excel 97 format as \Publications\Reports\2002\Attach3A.xls and in Adobe PDF format as \Publications\Reports\2002\Attach3A.pdf.

Supporting tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 3A.3 is table 3 in the electronic files). They may be subject to revision. The most up-to-date versions of these files can be found on the Review's web page ([www.pc.gov.au/gsp/](http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/)). Users without Internet access can contact the Secretariat to obtain up-to-date versions of these tables (see details inside the front cover of the Report).

## **3.1 Profile of school education**

### **Service overview**

Schools are the institutions within which organised school education takes place. They are differentiated by the type and level of education they provide, their ownership and management, and the characteristics of their student body.

The formal statistical definition of schools used for this chapter is:

... an establishment that satisfies all of the following criteria:

- its major activity is the provision of full time day primary, secondary or special school education or primary or secondary distance education;
- it is headed by a principal (or equivalent) responsible for its internal operation; and
- it is possible for students to enrol for a minimum of four continuous weeks (excluding breaks for school vacations) (ABS 2001a).

Student performance can be affected by factors that may be partly or totally outside the influence of the school, including student commitment, family income and commitment to education, the proximity of the school to other educational facilities, and the resources available to the school. It is beyond the scope of this Report to consider the effect of all factors, but this section provides some contextual background for the performance information presented later in the chapter. Further information is provided in appendix A.

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## **Roles and responsibilities**

The State and Territory governments have constitutional responsibility to ensure the delivery of schooling to all children of school age. They determine curricula, regulate school activities and provide most of the funding. State and Territory governments are directly responsible for the administration of government schools for which they provide the majority of government expenditure. Non-government schools operate under conditions determined by State and Territory government registration authorities and receive significant Commonwealth, State and Territory government funding.

The Commonwealth funds government and non-government schools through specific purpose payments. The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) — comprising Commonwealth, State and Territory education ministers — is the principal forum for developing national priorities and strategies for schooling.

## **Funding**

Commonwealth, State and Territory government expenditure on school education in 1999-2000 was \$20.7 billion (table 3.1). Expenditure on government schools was \$16.6 billion, or 80.2 per cent of the total. Government schools account for most of the expenditure by State and Territory governments, but these governments also contribute to the funding of non-government schools and provide services used by both government and non-government schools. This figure may not be totally comparable to that in the 2001 Report because it now includes Commonwealth funding on Indigenous-specific programs. More information, including on Commonwealth spending on Indigenous-specific programs, can be found in tables 3A.8 and 3A.9.

These expenditure figures are based on accrual accounting and are not comparable with expenditure figures included in previous reports (which were based on cash accounting).

Some data are presented on government funding of non-government schools. Caution needs to be taken in examining data on the efficiency of government and non-government schools because governments provide only part of the funding for non-government schools. Governments provided 57 per cent of the non-government school funding in 1999, with the remaining 43 per cent sourced from private fees and fundraising (MCEETYA 2001a).

**Table 3.1 Government expenditure on school education, 1999-2000**  
**(\$ million)<sup>a, b, c</sup>**

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
<b>Government schools</b>									
Commonwealth	604	410	329	183	142	51	29	40	1 846
States and Territories	4 671	3 558	3 040	1 360	1 160	427	270	321	14 747
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 274</b>	<b>3 968</b>	<b>3 368</b>	<b>1 543</b>	<b>1 301</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>16 592</b>
<b>Non-government schools</b>									
Commonwealth	958	765	529	279	216	59	60	35	2 900
States and Territories	434	245	233	137	72	26	25	22	1 195
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 392</b>	<b>1 010</b>	<b>762</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>4 096</b>
<b>All schools</b>									
Commonwealth	1 561	1 175	857	462	358	110	89	75	4 746
States and Territories	5 105	3 803	3 273	1 497	1 232	453	295	342	15 942
<b>Total</b>	<b>6 667</b>	<b>4 978</b>	<b>4 130</b>	<b>1 959</b>	<b>1 590</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>20 688</b>

<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 3A.11 for definitions and data caveats. <sup>b</sup> Based on accrual accounting (whereas financial data in previous reports are based on cash accounting). <sup>c</sup> Includes Commonwealth specific purpose payments to schools provided under Indigenous education programs. These payments were excluded in previous reports.

Source: table 3A.11.

## Size and scope

Descriptive information on the numbers of students, staff and schools can be found in tables 3A.1– 3A.5.

## Structure

The structure of school education varies among States and Territories. These differences can influence the interpretation of data presented under common classifications. Formal schooling begins with six to seven years of primary school education followed by five to six years of secondary school education, depending on the State or Territory (figure 3.1). All States and Territories divide school education into compulsory and non-compulsory components based on age, not grade. School education is compulsory in all States and Territories for people between 6 and 15 years of age (and to 16 years of age in Tasmania).

**Figure 3.1 Structure of primary and secondary schooling, 2000**

<i>Level</i>	<i>NSW, Vic, Tas, ACT</i>	<i>SA, NT</i>	<i>WA, Qld</i>
Year 12	SECONDARY	SECONDARY	SECONDARY
Year 11			
Year 10			
Year 9			
Year 8			
Year 7			
Year 6			
Year 5			
Year 4			
Year 3			
Year 2			
Year 1			
Pre-year 1 <sup>a</sup>	Kindergarten (NSW, ACT) Preparatory (Vic, Tas)	Reception (SA) Transition (NT)	

<sup>a</sup> Pre-year 1 is not included in the pattern of study in Queensland. Pre-year 1 is called 'pre-primary' in WA (where students attended on a four-day week basis in 2000). From 2002, pre-primary students in WA will be attending five days a week, at which time students and staff will be included within the scope of MCEETYA's National School Statistics Collection.

Source: MCEETYA (2001a).

### *Schools*

At the beginning of August 2000, there were 9595 schools in Australia. The majority of schools were government owned and managed (72.5 per cent) (table 3.2).

Settlement patterns (population dispersion), the age distribution of the population, and educational policy influence the distribution of schools by size and level in different jurisdictions. For school education as a whole in August 2000, the NT had the highest proportions of very small primary and secondary schools (those having 20 or fewer students) at 15.1 per cent and 5.6 per cent respectively. Nationally, 62.1 per cent of all secondary schools enrolled over 600 students (table 3A.17). A breakdown of primary and secondary schools by size for government, non-government and all schools is reported in tables 3A.15, 3A.16 and 3A.17 respectively.

**Table 3.2 Summary of school characteristics, August 2000**

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Government schools (no.)									
Primary	1 648	1236	985	517	452	142	67	91	5 138
Combined <sup>a</sup>	64	48	75	88	74	26	3	42	420
Secondary	393	266	188	95	75	39	22	12	1090
Special schools <sup>b</sup>	82	79	49	66	20	8	4	5	313
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 187</b>	<b>1629</b>	<b>1297</b>	<b>766</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>6 961</b>
Non-government schools (no.)									
Primary	535	449	235	155	119	33	26	15	1 567
Combined <sup>a</sup>	192	129	110	82	52	26	9	11	611
Secondary	141	103	74	38	25	7	6	6	400
Special schools <sup>b</sup>	33	14	2	2	3	1	1	0	56
<b>Total</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>695</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>2 634</b>
All schools (no.)									
Primary	2 183	1 685	1220	672	571	175	93	106	6 705
Combined <sup>a</sup>	256	177	185	170	126	52	12	53	1 031
Secondary	534	369	262	133	100	46	28	18	1 490
Special schools <sup>b</sup>	115	93	51	68	23	9	5	5	369
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 088</b>	<b>2 324</b>	<b>1 718</b>	<b>1 043</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>9 595</b>
Proportion of government schools (%)									
Primary	75.5	73.4	80.7	76.9	79.2	81.1	72.0	85.8	76.6
Combined <sup>a</sup>	25.0	27.1	40.5	51.8	58.7	50.0	25.0	79.2	40.7
Secondary	73.6	72.1	71.8	71.4	75.0	84.8	78.6	66.7	73.2
Special schools <sup>b</sup>	71.3	84.9	96.1	97.1	87.0	88.9	80.0	100.0	84.8
All schools	70.8	70.1	75.5	73.4	75.7	76.2	69.6	82.4	72.5
Proportion of primary schools (%) <sup>c</sup>									
Government	75.4	75.9	75.9	67.5	72.8	66.0	69.8	60.7	73.8
Non-government	59.4	64.6	55.8	56.0	59.8	49.3	61.9	46.9	59.5
All schools	70.7	72.5	71.0	64.4	69.6	62.1	67.4	58.2	69.9

<sup>a</sup> Combined primary and secondary schools. <sup>b</sup> Special schools provide special instruction for students with physical or intellectual disabilities and students with social problems. <sup>c</sup> Excludes combined primary and secondary schools.

Source: ABS (2001a).

### *Student body*

There were 3.3 million full time equivalent student enrolments in primary and secondary schools in August 2000 (table 3.3). The proportion of students enrolled in government schools was greater in primary schools (72.8 per cent) than in secondary schools (64.5 per cent). The proportion of students in government schools was highest in the NT (77.6 per cent) and lowest in the ACT (63.5 per cent).

Differences in schooling structures influence enrolment patterns. Primary school education, for example, goes to year 7 in Queensland, WA, SA and the NT and to year 6 in all other jurisdictions, and involves an additional year of schooling in SA

and the NT. As a result, the proportion of students enrolled in primary school education would be expected to be higher in these jurisdictions than others (table 3.3).

Total full time student equivalent enrolments in schools in Australia were relatively stable over the five years to 2000 — up by about 0.9 per cent each year between August 1996 and August 2000. Enrolments in individual jurisdictions grew at different rates, with total enrolments increasing by 1.6 per cent each year in Queensland and declining by 0.4 per cent each year in the ACT (table 3A.18).

**Table 3.3 Full time equivalent student enrolments, August 2000**

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i> <sup>a</sup>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Total full time equivalent student enrolments at level of education ('000)									
Primary schools	629.0	451.7	366.2	192.0	159.3	47.2	32.3	26.1	1 903.9
Secondary schools	467.7	351.3	238.2	126.9	93.4	38.1	28.2	11.7	1 355.5
All schools	1 096.6	803.1	604.3	318.9	252.8	85.3	60.5	37.8	3 259.4
Proportion of full time equivalent students who were enrolled in government schools (%)									
Primary schools	72.5	69.4	76.0	75.0	72.4	77.9	66.3	80.1	72.8
Secondary schools	65.4	61.5	64.5	65.3	66.4	72.9	60.3	72.0	64.5
All schools	69.5	65.9	71.5	71.2	70.2	75.7	63.5	77.6	69.3
Proportion of full time equivalent students in all schools who were female (%)									
Primary schools	48.7	48.6	48.7	48.6	48.5	48.8	48.8	48.8	48.6
Secondary schools	49.9	50.1	49.7	49.8	50.4	50.8	49.4	50.3	50.0
All schools	49.2	49.3	49.1	49.1	49.2	49.7	49.1	49.2	49.2
Proportion of full time equivalent students who were enrolled in primary education (%)									
Government schools	59.8	59.2	64.4	63.5	65.0	56.9	55.7	71.3	61.3
Non-government schools	51.7	50.6	51.0	52.1	58.4	50.3	49.3	61.3	51.8
All schools	57.4	56.2	60.6	60.2	63.0	55.3	53.4	69.1	58.4

<sup>a</sup> Students enrolled in special schools are included in this table, with special school students of primary school age included in the primary figures and those of secondary school age included in the secondary figures.

Source: ABS (2001a).

The proportion of students enrolled in non-government schools increased between August 1996 and August 2000 in all States and Territories except Tasmania. Total non-government school enrolments expanded by about 2.1 per cent each year — nearly seven times greater than the average annual growth rate in government school enrolments (table 3A.18). The expansion of enrolments in non-government schools, however, is from a lower base than that for government schools.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) publishes data on part time students at only the secondary level. Part time courses are available to secondary students, including mature-age students attending colleges and those studying year 11 or year 12 short courses (lasting 5–22 weeks).

The proportion of secondary school students who were part time in 2000 varied considerably among jurisdictions, partly because each education authority had different policy and organisational arrangements for part time study. The number of part time courses available also varied considerably among jurisdictions. South Australia, Tasmania and the NT had the highest proportion of part time government secondary school students in 2000 (table 3.4).

**Table 3.4 Part time secondary school students in government schools<sup>a</sup>**

	<i>Unit</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Number of part time secondary school students in government schools										
1996	no.	1 776	1 758	5 280	4 518	5 698	2 475	13	869	22 387
1997	no.	2 204	2 185	6 911	4 447	6 054	2 824	3	663	25 291
1998	no.	3 029	2 044	4 276	4 157	5 909	2 607	10	961	22 993
1999	no.	3 323	2 495	4 063	4 199	6 545	3 203	6	1 032	24 866
2000	no.	3 638	2 489	3 868	4 154	7 015	3 538	7	977	25 686
Proportion of part time secondary school students in government schools										
1996	%	0.6	0.8	3.5	5.4	9.1	8.5	0.1	10.3	2.6
1997	%	0.7	1.0	4.7	5.2	9.5	9.4	–	7.7	2.8
1998	%	1.0	0.9	2.8	4.8	9.2	8.7	0.1	10.9	2.6
1999	%	1.1	1.1	2.6	4.8	9.9	10.7	–	11.6	2.8
2000	%	1.2	1.1	2.5	4.8	10.7	12.0	–	10.9	2.9

<sup>a</sup> Absolute number of part time secondary students, not full time equivalent and proportion (part time) students, as a proportion of all full time and part time secondary students (absolute numbers) in government schools).

– Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: ABS (2001a).

### *Special needs groups*

Certain groups of students have been identified as having special needs in education. These special needs groups include:

- Indigenous students;
- students from language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE);
- students with disabilities;
- students from families of low socioeconomic status; and
- students who are geographically isolated.

Government schools provide education for a high proportion of students from special needs groups. Around 80 per cent of students with disabilities and nearly 90 per cent of Indigenous students, for example, attend government schools (AIHW 1999). This chapter reports on the proportion of Indigenous students and



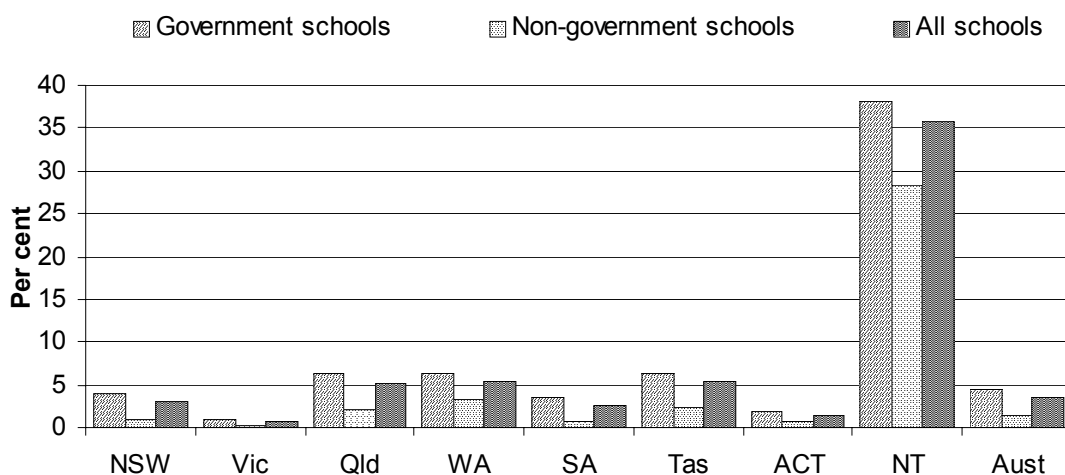
students with disabilities. Care needs to be taken in interpreting this information because some definitions of ‘special needs’ differ across States and Territories.

### *Indigenous students*

Reflecting its population profile, the NT had the highest proportion (35.9 per cent) of Indigenous students in 2000. The jurisdictions with the next highest proportions of Indigenous students were WA and Tasmania (5.4 per cent), and Queensland (5.1 per cent) (figure 3.2). In absolute terms, NSW had the largest number of Indigenous students (32 354), accounting for 29.0 per cent of all Indigenous students enrolled in Australian schools.

In all jurisdictions, the proportion of Indigenous students was higher in government schools than in non-government schools. Nationally, the proportion of Indigenous students was 4.3 per cent for government schools and 1.4 per cent for non-government schools. Table 3A.12 provides additional information on Indigenous enrolments.

**Figure 3.2 Indigenous full time students as a proportion of all students, 2000**



Source: table 3A.12.

### *Students from language backgrounds other than English*

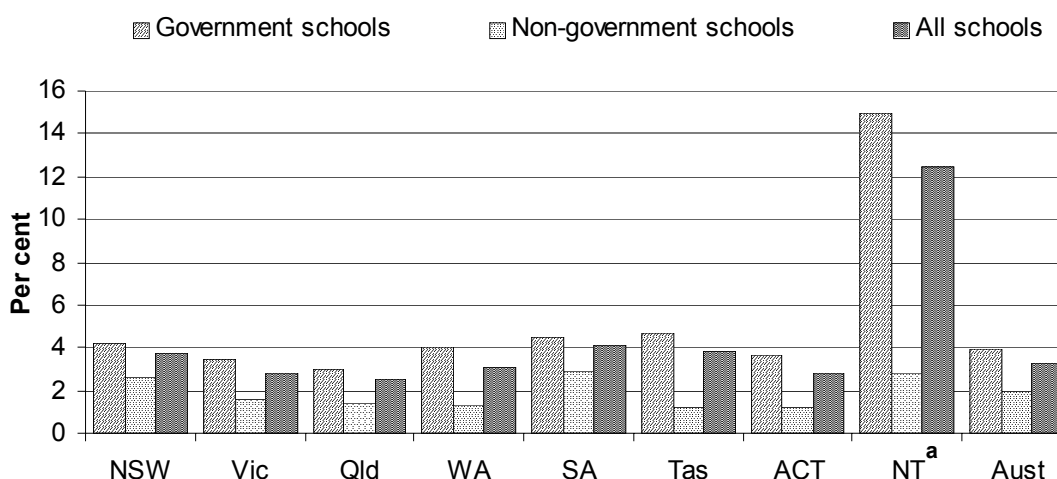
The proportion of LBOTE students in government schools and all schools, based on data from the 1996 Census, was published in the 2000 and 2001 reports (SCRCSSP 2000 and 2001) and are at table 3A.13. The Census is conducted every five years, so no new data are available for this Report.

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### Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities are educated in both mainstream and special schools. In figure 3.3, students with disabilities are those that satisfy the criteria for enrolment in special education services provided in the State or Territory in which they reside. The NT had the highest proportion (12.4 per cent) of students with disabilities in 2000, while Queensland had the lowest (2.5 per cent) (figure 3.3). The proportion of students with disabilities in government schools was around twice as high as those in non-government schools in all jurisdictions, and more than five times as high in the NT.

Figure 3.3 **Students with disabilities as a proportion of all students, 2000**



<sup>a</sup> The NT advises caution regarding these figures. Source data are being examined for accuracy.

Source: table 3A.14.

## 3.2 Policy developments in schools education

### MCEETYA taskforces

At its July 2001 meeting, MCEETYA endorsed the formation of seven new schools based taskforces to support its deliberations on achieving the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty First Century. These taskforces will enhance national collaboration and advance the national schooling agenda in the following key areas:

- schools resourcing;
- teacher quality and educational leadership;

- 
- student learning and support services;
  - information and communication technologies in schools;
  - Indigenous students and other targeted initiatives of national significance;
  - transition from school; and
  - performance measurement and reporting

### **Indigenous students**

Launched in March 2000 by the Prime Minister, the National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy is aimed at improving education outcomes for Indigenous people. Funding for the strategy is provided under the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP). Recipients of the IESIP are required to enter into an Indigenous Education Agreement with the Commonwealth, which includes baseline and annual performance targets for improvement. Annual performance reports detail the outcomes achieved. A set of standard performance indicators has been developed for all jurisdictions to use in IESIP reporting for the 2001–04 quadrennium.

## **3.3 Framework of performance indicators**

This chapter provides comparable indicators on the effectiveness and efficiency of government expenditure for all schools in Australia. It does not compare the efficiency of government and non-government schools.

Governments own and operate government schools and have a direct interest in the efficiency and effectiveness of their operation. In addition, governments are committed to providing access to education for all students (box 3.1). The reporting framework for schools (figure 3.4) is consistent with government goals for the school system. All indicators are defined in section 3.7.

### **Box 3.1 National goals for school education in Australia, 1999**

The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs endorsed in April 1999 the following set of national goals for school education.

#### **Preamble**

Australia's future depends upon each citizen having the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and values for a productive and rewarding life in an educated, just and open society. High quality schooling is central to achieving this vision.

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**Box 3.1 (Continued)**

This statement of national goals for schooling provides broad directions to guide schools and education authorities in securing these outcomes for students.

It acknowledges the capacity of all young people to learn, and the role of schooling in developing that capacity. It also acknowledges the role of parents as the first educators of their children and the central role of teachers in the learning process.

Schooling provides a foundation for young Australians' intellectual, physical, social, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development. By providing a supportive and nurturing environment, schooling contributes to the development of students' sense of self-worth, enthusiasm for learning and optimism for the future.

Governments set the public policies that foster the pursuit of excellence, enable a diverse range of educational choices and aspirations, safeguard the entitlement of all young people to high quality schooling, promote the economic use of public resources, and uphold the contribution of schooling to a socially cohesive and culturally rich society.

Common and agreed goals for schooling establish a foundation for action among State and Territory governments with their constitutional responsibility for schooling, the Commonwealth, non-government school authorities and all those who seek the best possible educational outcomes for young Australians, to improve the quality of schooling nationally.

The achievement of these common and agreed national goals entails a commitment to collaboration for the purposes of:

- further strengthening schools as learning communities where teachers, students and their families work in partnership with business, industry and the wider community;
- enhancing the status and quality of the teaching profession;
- continuing to develop curriculum and related systems of assessment, accreditation and credentialling that promote quality and are nationally recognised and valued;
- increasing public confidence in school education through explicit and defensible standards that guide improvement in students' levels of educational achievement and through which the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of schooling can be measured and evaluated.

These national goals provide a basis for investment in schooling to enable all young people to engage effectively with an increasingly complex world. This world will be characterised by advances in information and communication technologies, population diversity arising from international mobility and migration, and complex environmental and social challenges.

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**Box 3.1 (Continued)**

The achievement of the national goals for schooling will assist young people to contribute to Australia's social, cultural and economic development in local and global contexts. Their achievement will also assist young people to develop a disposition towards learning throughout their lives so that they can exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens of Australia.

**Goals**

**1. Schooling should develop fully the talents and capacities of all students. In particular, when students leave schools they should:**

- 1.1 have the capacity for, and skills in, analysis and problem solving and the ability to communicate ideas and information, to plan and organise activities and to collaborate with others;
- 1.2 have qualities of self-confidence, optimism, high self-esteem, and a commitment to personal excellence as a basis for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members;
- 1.3 have the capacity to exercise judgment and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice, and the capacity to make sense of their world, to think about how things got to be the way they are, to make rational and informed decisions about their own lives and to accept responsibility for their own actions;
- 1.4 be active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life;
- 1.5 have employment related skills and an understanding of the work environment, career options and pathways as a foundation for, and positive attitudes towards, vocational education and training, further education, employment and life-long learning;
- 1.6 be confident, creative and productive users of new technologies, particularly information and communication technologies, and understand the impact of those technologies on society;
- 1.7 have an understanding of, and concern for, stewardship of the natural environment, and the knowledge and skills to contribute to ecologically sustainable development; and
- 1.8 have the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to establish and maintain a healthy lifestyle, and for the creative and satisfying use of leisure time.

**2. In terms of curriculum, students should have:**

- 2.1 attained high standards of knowledge, skills and understanding through a comprehensive and balanced curriculum in the compulsory years of schooling encompassing the agreed eight key learning areas:
  - the arts
  - English

(Continued on next page)

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**Box 3.1 (Continued)**

- health and physical education
- languages other than English
- mathematics
- science
- studies of society and environment
- technology

and the interrelationships between them;

- 2.2 attained the skills of numeracy and English literacy, such that every student should be numerate, able to read, write, spell and communicate at an appropriate level;
- 2.3 participated in programs of vocational learning during the compulsory years and have had access to vocational education and training programs as part of their senior secondary studies; and
- 2.4 participated in programs and activities which foster and develop enterprise skills, including those skills which will allow them maximum flexibility and adaptability in the future.

**3. Schooling should be socially just, so that:**

- 3.1 students' outcomes from schooling are free from the effects of negative forms of discrimination based on sex, language, culture and ethnicity, religion or disability; and of differences arising from students' socioeconomic background or geographic location;
- 3.2 the learning outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students improve and, over time, match those of other students;
- 3.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have equitable access to, and opportunities in, schooling so that their learning outcomes improve and, over time, match those of other students;
- 3.4 all students understand and acknowledge the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to Australian society and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians;
- 3.5 all students understand and acknowledge the value of cultural and linguistic diversity, and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, such diversity in the Australian community and internationally; and
- 3.6 all students have access to the high quality education necessary to enable the completion of school education to year 12 or its vocational equivalent and that provides clear and recognised pathways to employment and further education and training.

*Source:* MCEETYA (1999).

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## 3.4 Key performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts and locations affect the effectiveness and efficiency of school education services. Appendix A contains detailed statistics and short profiles on each State and Territory, which may help in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. Figure 3.4 contains a framework for performance indicators. This section reports on what jurisdictions currently collect and assess in terms of the performance indicators.

### Effectiveness

The effectiveness indicators for school education in this chapter are based on the achievement of the national goals for school education.

#### *State and Territory specific learning outcomes*

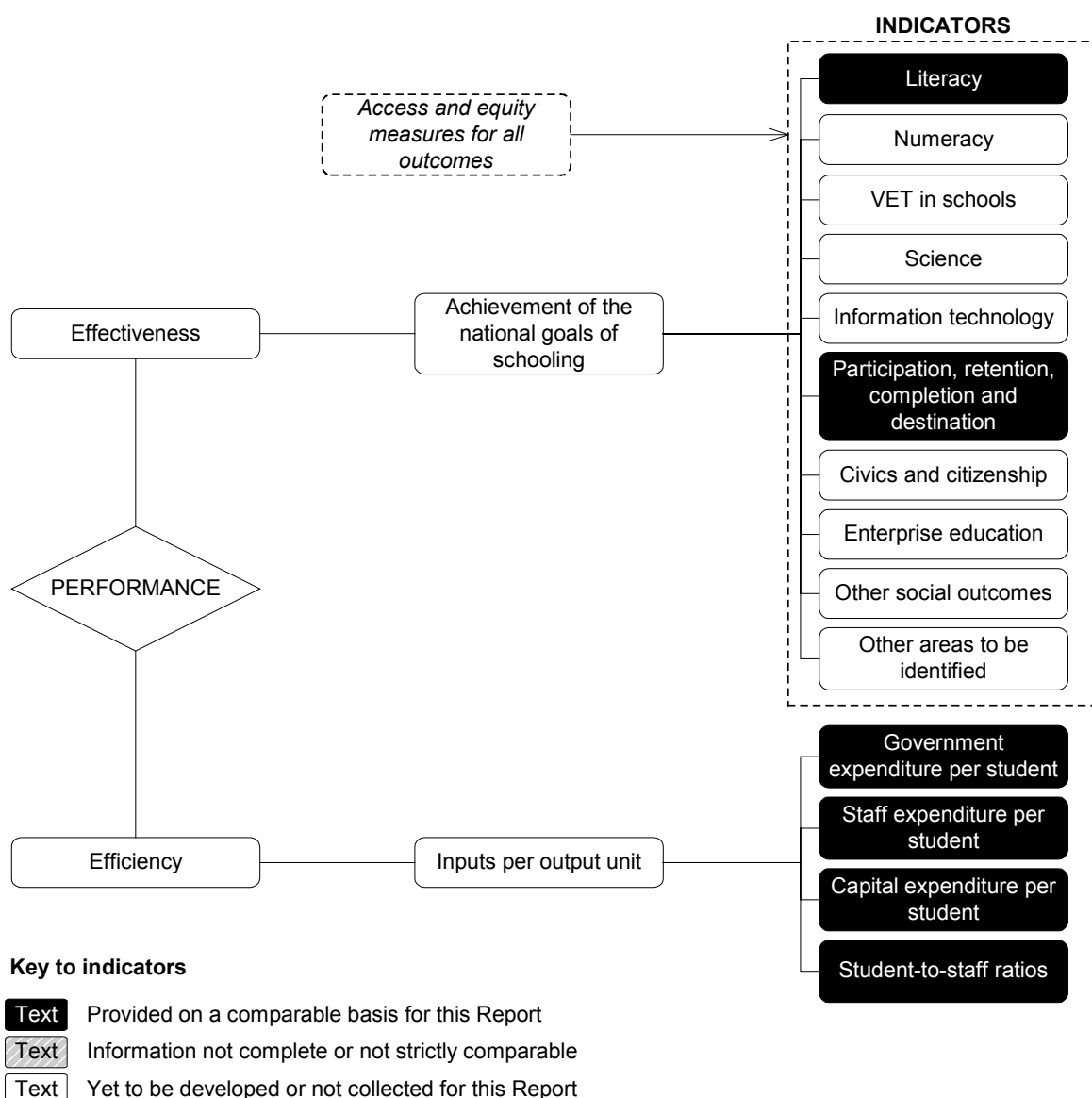
The reporting of test result data by jurisdictions provides some insight into how learning outcomes are measured and may help an understanding of trends within jurisdictions over time, although the general non-comparability of data across States and Territories reduces the usefulness of this information.

Jurisdictions are in the process of aligning jurisdiction-specific testing with benchmarks for nationally comparable learning outcomes for a range of indicators. As a result, some jurisdictions have stopped collecting the jurisdiction-specific learning outcomes data published in previous reports. Where jurisdictions provided updated information on jurisdiction-specific learning outcomes, that information is reported in attachment 3A.

#### *Access and equity*

Access and equity objectives of school education can be assessed by comparing outcomes for special needs groups to those for the mainstream student population through indicators such as completion rates, apparent retention rates, age participation rates and learning outcomes. Outcomes are compared for special needs groups for available indicators where possible. Learning outcomes for Indigenous students and LBOTE students are also reported for Victoria, Queensland, WA and the NT in tables 3A.54–3A.57, 3A.67, 3A.76, 3A.78 and 3A.126.

Figure 3.4 Performance indicators for all schools



### Performance benchmarks

In July 1996, Commonwealth, States and Territory education ministers agreed to develop national benchmarks for use in reporting years 3, 5 and 7 students' performance. Benchmarks have been developed for reading, writing, spelling and numeracy. These benchmarks describe the nationally agreed minimum acceptable standard in the aforementioned areas of study, at a particular year level — that is, the standard without which a student will have difficulty making sufficient progress at school. Given that the benchmarks represent *minimum* acceptable standards, education ministers have determined that the national goal is that all students achieve at least the benchmark level of performance.



## Literacy

An indicator of performance is the proportion of students who reach a benchmark standard. Table 3.5 shows the percentage of assessed year 5 students who achieved the reading benchmark in 1999 reported by gender, Indigenous status and LBOTE status. (For further information and caveats to table 3.5, see tables 3A.25, 3A.26 and 3A.27.) Data on year 3 reading in 1999 can be found in the 2001 Report.

**Table 3.5 Proportion of year 5 students who achieved the reading benchmark, 1999 (per cent)<sup>a</sup>**

<i>State/Territory</i>					
<i>1. Average age<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Indigenous</i>	<i>LBOTE</i>
<i>2. Years of schooling<sup>c</sup></i>	<i>students</i>	<i>students</i>	<i>students</i>	<i>students<sup>d</sup></i>	<i>students<sup>d</sup></i>
NSW	90.3	88.6	92.0	72.5	89.1
1. 10 yrs, 9 mths	± 1.4	± 1.6	± 1.3	± 3.6	± 1.8
2. 5 yrs, 7 mths					
Victoria	88.0	85.6	90.5	64.8	83.4
1. 10 yrs, 11 mths	± 1.9	± 2.1	± 1.7	± 6.7	± 2.6
2. 5 yrs, 7 mths					
Queensland <sup>e</sup>	80.0	78.2	84.3	54.4	75.2
1. 10 yrs, 3 mths	± 3.0	± 3.5	± 2.6	± 5.6	± 3.8
2. 4 yrs, 8 mths					
WA	79.5	75.5	83.6	42.2	73.1
1. 10 yrs, 2 mths	± 2.7	± 3.1	± 2.3	± 4.1	± 3.2
2. 5 yrs, 7 mths					
SA	82.8	80.2	85.8	58.7	na
1. 10 yrs, 6 mths	± 1.5	± 1.8	± 1.4	± 2.9	
2. 5 yrs, 3 mths					
Tasmania	78.7	76.2	81.3	63.3	63.3
1. 11 yrs, 0 mths	± 2.1	± 2.2	± 1.9	± 2.3	± 3.3
2. 5 yrs, 7 mths					
ACT	90.4	88.6	92.1	69.1	77.6
1. 10 yrs, 9 mths	± 1.6	± 2.2	± 1.9	± 27.5	± 4.9
2. 5 yrs, 6 mths					
NT	78.4	77.3	80.0	46.2	37.5
1. 10 yrs, 7 mths	± 1.7	± 2.0	± 1.5	± 2.4	± 2.2
2. 5 yrs, 3 mths					
Australia	85.6	83.4	88.4	58.6	na

<sup>a</sup> The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95 per cent confidence intervals (for example, 80 per cent ± 2.7 per cent). Table 3A.26 contains details of test populations in all States and Territories. <sup>b</sup> The typical average age of students at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table 3A.25 contains more information. <sup>c</sup> The typical average time that students had spent in schooling at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table 3A.25 contains more information. <sup>d</sup> The methods used to identify Indigenous students and LBOTE students varied across jurisdictions. Definitions can be found at section 3.7. Table 3A.27 contains more information. <sup>e</sup> Data for the proportions of male, female, Indigenous and LBOTE students do not include students who were formally exempted from testing. **na** Not available.

Source: MCEETYA (2001a).

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## *Participation, retention, completion and school leaver destination*

### *Participation rate*

The participation rate of 15–19 year olds (for whom school attendance is no longer compulsory) measures the number of full time school students in that age group, as a proportion of the estimated resident population of the same age. Care needs to be taken in interpreting participation rates in school education because rates are influenced by differences across jurisdictions in:

- year and age/grade structures;
- other options for delivering post-compulsory education and training (for example, work based training and enrolment in technical and further education [TAFE] delivered programs);
- the extent of part time enrolment in schools (see table 3.4 for part time student enrolments).

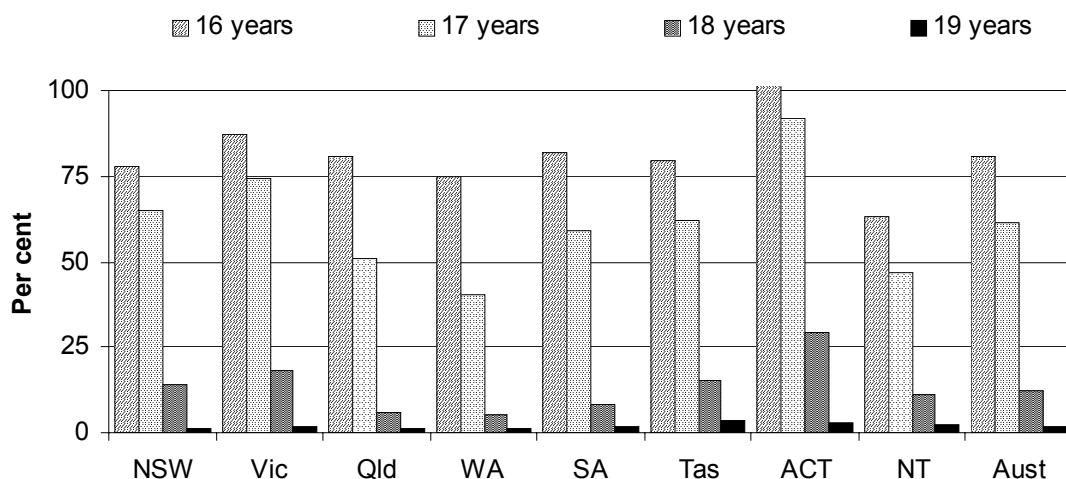
The participation rate may understate the extent of participation in post-compulsory schooling for these reasons. Further work to improve the comparability of the participation rate is discussed in section 3.5.

Nationally, 49.8 per cent of 15–19 year olds were enrolled in schools in 2000 (table 3A.19). Actual participation rates varied by jurisdiction, age and gender.

- The ACT had the highest overall participation rate of 15–19 year olds (63.4 per cent) and the NT had the lowest overall participation rate (41.7 per cent).
- Participation rates for females were typically 2–4 percentage points higher than those for males in all jurisdictions.
- Participation rates declined significantly as students exceeded the maximum compulsory school age (16 years for Tasmania and 15 years for other jurisdictions) (figure 3.5).

Participation rates in the ACT in 2000, as in the past, were higher than those in other jurisdictions for all ages (exceeding 100 per cent for 16 year olds). This is a result of the enrolment in the ACT of NSW residents from surrounding areas.

Figure 3.5 **School participation rates by age of students, all schools, August 2000<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Proportion of the population who were not of compulsory school age but were enrolled as full time students in August 2000. <sup>b</sup> School is compulsory for 16 year olds in Tasmania.

Source: table 3A.19.

### *Apparent retention rate*

The apparent retention rate is derived by measuring the number of full time school students enrolled in year 12 in 2000 and expressing this as a proportion of the number of full time school students enrolled in year 10 in 1998. Progression to final years of schooling is influenced by a wide range of factors, including student perceptions of the benefits of schooling, the availability of employment and further educational alternatives, socioeconomic status and population movements. Apparent retention is a long-standing measure which is presented as an indicator of the extent to which students progress to their final year of education. It has been consistently reported over time, but, it does not reflect factors such as:

- students repeating a year of education or returning to education after a period of absence and hence being included in the year 10 cohort in 1998 but not in the year 12 cohort in 2000;
- differing enrolment policies across jurisdictions (which contribute to different age/grade structures);
- students enrolled in year 12 on a part time basis (see table 3.4 for the proportions of part time students in government schools in each jurisdiction);
- interstate movement of students;

- 
- movement from the government to non-government schools sector;
  - impacts of migration and full-fee paying overseas students; and
  - varying enrolment patterns in which students choose to complete their secondary schooling in TAFE institutes.

All these factors can combine to result in a year 12 cohort that is significantly different in composition from the corresponding year 10 cohort — for example:

- in SA in 2000, 85.2 per cent of all students, including part time students, had continued their schooling from year 10 to year 12, compared with 69.5 per cent for full time students only (ABS 1999, 2001a); and
- in NSW, a significant number of students use the TAFE system to complete their post-compulsory schooling in preference to enrolling in years 11 and 12 in the school system. In 2000, around 4000 students aged 15–19 years who undertook higher schools certificate studies in NSW did so through TAFE institutes.

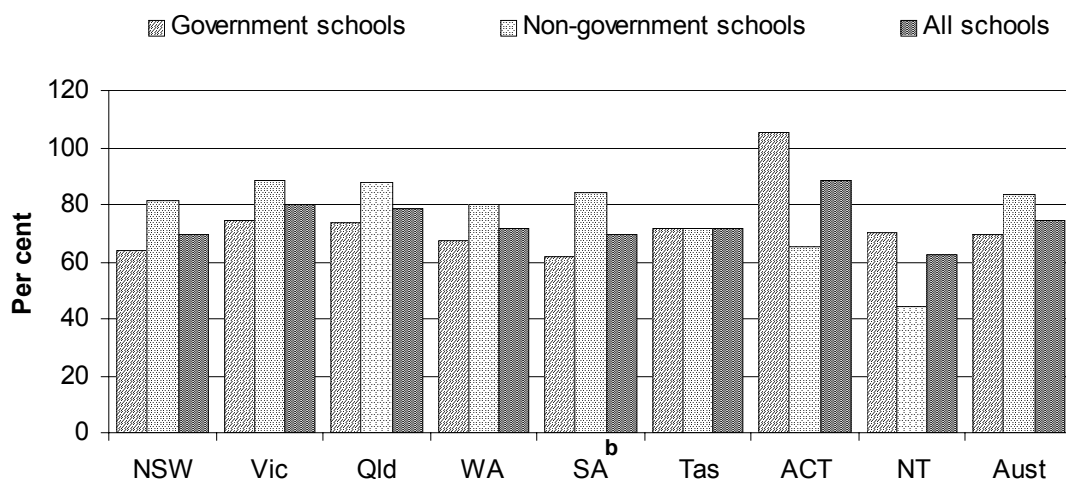
Work being undertaken to improve this measure is discussed in section 3.5.

The ABS publishes two separate measures of apparent retention rates: the first indicates student progression from years 7 and 8 to year 12, while the second indicates student progression from year 10 to year 12. This Report uses retention from year 10 to year 12 because that measure is less affected than the former measure by factors such as inter-sector transfers and interstate movement.

Apparent retention rates from year 10 to year 12 in all schools ranged from 88.7 per cent in the ACT to 62.2 per cent in the NT in 2000. The apparent retention rates for government schools ranged from 105.0 per cent in the ACT to 61.9 per cent in SA (figure 3.6). One reason for the ACT rate for government schools exceeding 100 per cent is that a number of non-government schools do not enrol students beyond year 10 and students need to change schools to continue to years 11 and 12. This has the effect of reducing the retention rate for non-government schools and increasing the retention rate for government schools.

For all schools, apparent retention rates from year 10 to year 12 for Indigenous students in 2000 ranged from 70.0 per cent in the ACT to 28.1 per cent in WA in 2000 (figure 3.7). This indicator may need to be interpreted with regard to retention rates to year 10 for Indigenous students. Nationally, Indigenous retention to year 10 for all schools in 2000 was 14.6 percentage points lower than the retention rate for all students, although this varied across jurisdictions (table 3A.20).

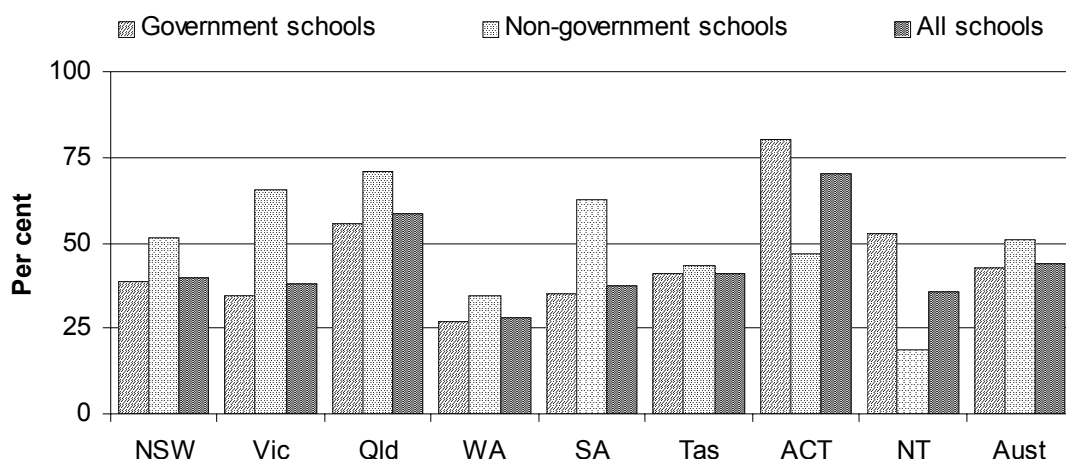
Figure 3.6 **Apparent retention rates of full time secondary students from year 10 to year 12, 2000<sup>a</sup>**



**a** Retention rates are affected by a number of factors that vary across jurisdictions. For these reasons, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. Retention rates can exceed 100 per cent because student transfers between government and non-government schools occurred after the base year. **b** The exclusion of part time students from standard apparent retention rate calculations has particular implications for the interpretation of results for SA.

Source: table 3A.21.

Figure 3.7 **Apparent retention rates of Indigenous full time secondary students from year 10 to year 12, 2000**

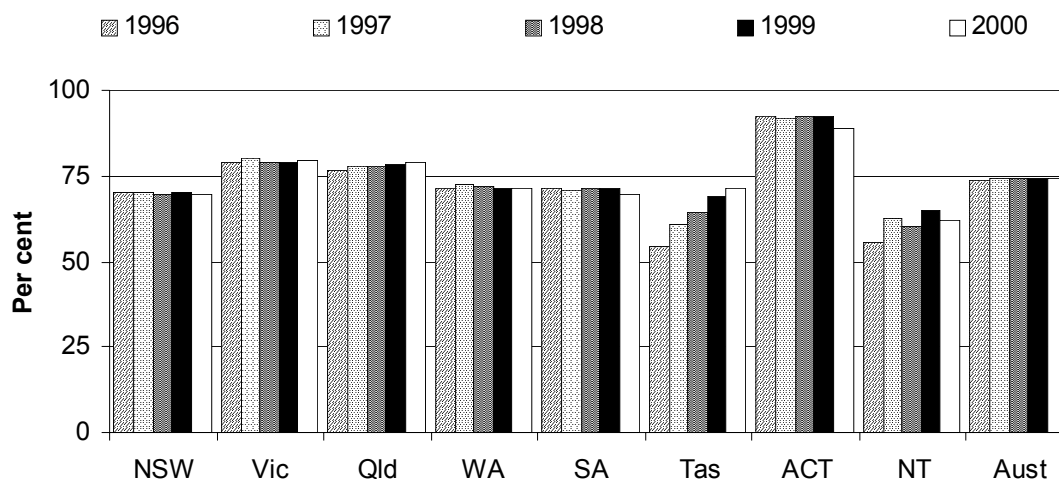


**a** Retention rates are affected by a number of factors that vary across jurisdictions. For these reasons, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. Retention rates can exceed 100 per cent because student transfers between government and non-government schools occurred after the base year. **b** The exclusion of part time students from standard apparent retention rate calculations has particular implications for the interpretation of results for SA.

Source: table 3A.21.

Between 1996 and 2000, apparent retention rates from year 10 to year 12 in all schools increased in Tasmania and the NT, and remained fairly steady in all other jurisdictions (figure 3.8). Other information on apparent retention rates can be found in table 3A.20.

**Figure 3.8 Apparent retention rates of full time secondary students from year 10 to year 12, all schools**



Sources: ABS (2001a); table 3A.21.

### *Completion of secondary schooling*

The Commonwealth Government has developed a method for estimating the proportion of young Australians who complete year 12, disaggregated by locality, socioeconomic background and gender. Completion rates are estimated by calculating the number of students who obtain a year 12 certificate expressed as a percentage of the potential year 12 population (for the definition of the potential year 12 population, see section 3.7).

The Commonwealth uses the completion rates in the absence of participation or retention data by socioeconomic background or geographic location. Completion rates are primarily used as indicators of trends. Small changes in population or completions can affect rates quite significantly, particularly for smaller States and the Territories. Also, assessment, reporting and certification methods for year 12 vary across States and Territories. Given these differences, comparisons among jurisdictions need to be made with care.

Geographic isolation is determined using the method developed by the former Department of Primary Industry and Energy. Socioeconomic status is determined

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according to the Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage developed by the ABS. Low socioeconomic status is the average of the three lowest deciles and high socioeconomic status is the average of the three highest deciles. The aggregation of all postcode locations into three categories — high, medium and low — means that there may be significant variation within the categories. Low deciles, for example, will include locations ranging from those of extreme disadvantage to those of moderate disadvantage.

Year 12 completion rates in 2000 by socioeconomic background, location and gender are provided in tables 3.6 and 3.7. The data show that students in capital cities had the highest completion rates in 2000, while students in rural or remote areas other than rural centres generally had the next highest completion rates. Gender differences are also evident, with the completion rates for females consistently higher than those for males in 2000, regardless of location or socioeconomic background.

Table 3.6 highlights differences in completion rates on the basis of socioeconomic background. Completion rates for students from a low socioeconomic background were 17 percentage points below those for students from a high socioeconomic background in 2000. The completion rates in both socioeconomic categories were higher for female students; female completion rates in the low socioeconomic category were only 4 percentage points behind males in the high socioeconomic category in 2000.

Table 3.6 also indicates that the 2000 completion rates varied substantially across jurisdictions. Rates in the low socioeconomic status deciles ranged from 70 per cent in Queensland to 14 per cent in the NT. Rates for the high socioeconomic status deciles (for jurisdictions with available data) ranged from 95 per cent in Tasmania to 76 per cent in Victoria.

Gender differences are also evident in table 3.7. In other rural and remote areas there was a 21 percentage point difference between male and female completion rates in 2000. In capital cities, there was an 11 percentage point gender difference.

Time series data on completion rates are shown in tables 3A.22 and 3A.23.

**Table 3.6 Year 12 estimated completion rates by socioeconomic status and gender, 2000 (per cent)<sup>a</sup>**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT <sup>b</sup>	NT <sup>c</sup>	Aust
Low socioeconomic status deciles									
Male	53	54	63	45	48	58	..	11	54
Female	69	71	77	54	68	69	..	16	69
All students	61	62	70	50	58	63	..	14	61
High socioeconomic status deciles									
Male	71	71	78	74	77	90	78	na	73
Female	83	82	79	82	93	99	86	na	83
All students	77	76	78	78	85	95	82	na	78
Total									
Male	59	61	68	57	59	68	77	23	61
Female	72	76	77	68	78	81	85	35	74
All students	65	68	73	63	68	74	81	28	67

<sup>a</sup> The ABS Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage has been used to calculate socioeconomic status on the basis of students' home addresses. Low socioeconomic status is the average of the three lowest deciles and high socioeconomic status is the average of the three highest deciles. <sup>b</sup> On the basis of this index, the ACT has only medium and high socioeconomic status deciles. <sup>c</sup> Small increases in the estimated resident population can cause significant fluctuations in the data. As a result, high socioeconomic status rates for the NT are unreliable and have been excluded. **na** Not available. **..** Not applicable.

Source: DETYA (unpublished).

### *School leaver destinations*

The Education preface of this Report discusses the destinations of year 12 leavers and early school leavers in 2000 at the national level, and examines the proportions of male and female students attending other educational institutions in 2000 after leaving school in the previous year (table B.4, which also shows the proportion of students who were not attending any educational institution in 2000).

### *Social objectives of schooling*

In 1996, the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, on behalf of MCEETYA, commissioned an investigation 'to define and describe aspects of the social objectives of schooling'. The purpose of this investigation was to obtain baseline data on achievements against the selected social objectives and to investigate the role and influence of schools in this regard (Ainley *et al.* 1998, p. xiii). The 1999 Report includes a summary of these results.



**Table 3.7 Year 12 estimated completion rates by locality and gender, 2000 (per cent)**

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SA<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Tas<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>ACT<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>NT<sup>c</sup></i>	<i>Aust</i>
Capital city									
Male	63	63	71	61	62	79	77	30	64
Female	75	76	78	69	79	88	85	51	75
All students	68	70	74	65	70	83	81	40	70
Other metropolitan									
Male	53	53	65	..	..	..	..	..	57
Female	63	69	72	..	..	..	..	..	66
All students	58	61	69	..	..	..	..	..	62
Rural centres									
Male	53	55	66	53	44	67	..	..	58
Female	66	72	74	61	62	80	..	..	70
All students	59	63	70	57	53	73	..	..	64
Other rural and remote areas									
Male	55	54	66	46	53	52	..	17	55
Female	76	80	84	65	83	71	..	21	76
All students	65	66	74	55	67	61	..	19	65
All areas									
Male	59	61	68	57	59	68	77	23	61
Female	72	76	77	68	78	81	85	35	74
All students	65	68	73	63	68	74	81	28	67

<sup>a</sup> There are no Other Metropolitan Areas in this jurisdiction. <sup>b</sup> All of the ACT is defined as a Capital City. <sup>c</sup> There are no Other Metropolitan or Rural Centres in the NT. .. Not applicable.

Source: DETYA (unpublished).

## Efficiency

Governments have an interest in achieving the best results from their expenditure on schooling, both as owners and operators of government schools, and as the major providers of funds to the non-government school sector. An objective for the Review is to publish comparable estimates of costs. Ideally, such comparison includes the full range of costs to government. Where the full costs cannot be measured, cost is best estimated on a consistent basis. Significant effort has been made to improve the method for calculating the indicators in this Report and to document any differences. However, some concerns remain over the comparability of the results because jurisdictions use somewhat different methods of data collection. Table 3.8 summarises these differences and table 3A.24 contains more information.

**Table 3.8 Comparability of expenditure — items included, 1999-2000**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
Superannuation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	na
<i>Basis of estimate</i>	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	na
Workers compensation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	na
Payroll tax <sup>a</sup>	✓	x	✓	x <sup>a</sup>	✓	✓	x	na
<i>Basis of estimate</i>	Accrual	..	Accrual	..	Accrual	Accrual	..	na
Termination and long service leave	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	na
<i>Basis of estimate</i>	Accrual	..	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	na
Sick leave	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓	na
<i>Basis of estimate</i>	..	..	..	..	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	na
Depreciation	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	na
Rent	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	na
<i>Basis of estimate</i>	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	na
Utilities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	na
<i>Basis of estimate</i>	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	Accrual	na
Umbrella department costs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	na
<i>Basis of apportionment<sup>b</sup></i>	Formula	Formula	Formula	Formula	Per student	Per FTE student	Formula	na

<sup>a</sup> Education departments in WA and the ACT are exempt from payroll tax. <sup>b</sup> Umbrella department costs are apportioned according to: departmental program structure in NSW; use (including enrolment) in Victoria; and activity based costing in the ACT. **na** Not available. **..** Not applicable. **✓** Included. **x** Excluded. FTE = full time equivalent.

Source: Commonwealth, State and Territory governments.

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### *Government recurrent expenditure per student*

A number of factors may influence government recurrent expenditure per student (box 3.2).

#### **Box 3.2 Factors that may influence the level of expenditure per student**

Differences in the costs of educating students can be driven by:

- influences beyond the control of governments, such as a high proportion of geographically isolated population and/or a dispersed population;
- policy changes in education, such as tradeoffs between reducing costs and improving the quality of education, or between reducing costs and increasing the accessibility of education; and
- how well the education department and schools manage resources.

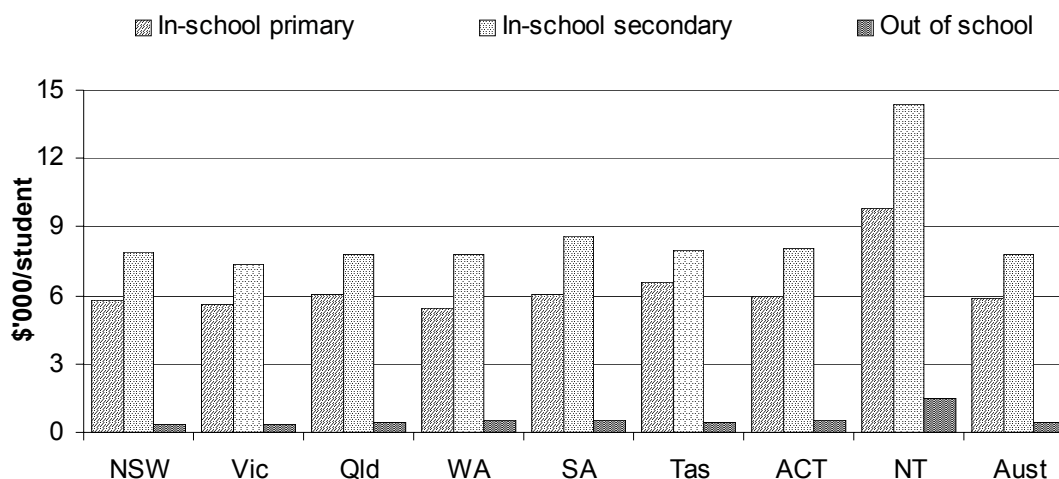
The Commonwealth Grants Commission, when calculating relativities between States and Territories to distribute Commonwealth general purpose grants, accounts for influences beyond a jurisdiction's control (called disabilities) that affect its cost of providing services and its capacity to raise revenue. In relation to education, the assessment includes 'service delivery scale' disability factors. These factors allow for the effects on relative cost differences among jurisdictions that have to service small and remote schools because they have a small and dispersed population. However, this Report does not make any cost adjustments based on any of the above factors. These factors may need to be considered when examining each jurisdiction's expenditure per student.

The introduction of accrual accounting was completed for the 1999-2000 financial year for all jurisdictions except the NT. Accrual accounts for 1998-99 were also constructed and are included in this Report (tables 3A.30 and 3A.31). These financial data are not comparable with financial data from earlier years which were calculated on a cash accounting basis. This also means that the 1998-99 financial data in the 2001 Report (which was prepared on a cash basis) may not be comparable with the 1998-99 data in this Report. Tables 3A.28 and 3A.29 contain more information.

A proxy indicator of efficiency is the level of government inputs per unit of output (unit cost). In-school government expenditure per full time equivalent student in government primary schools ranged from \$9813 in the NT to \$5455 in WA in 1999-2000. In-school government expenditure per full time equivalent secondary student in government secondary schools ranged from \$13 568 in the NT to \$7306

in Victoria. Out-of-school departmental overheads per full time equivalent student in government schools ranged from \$1453 in the NT to \$308 in NSW (figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9 **Total government expenditure per full time equivalent student, government schools, 1999-2000<sup>a, b</sup>**

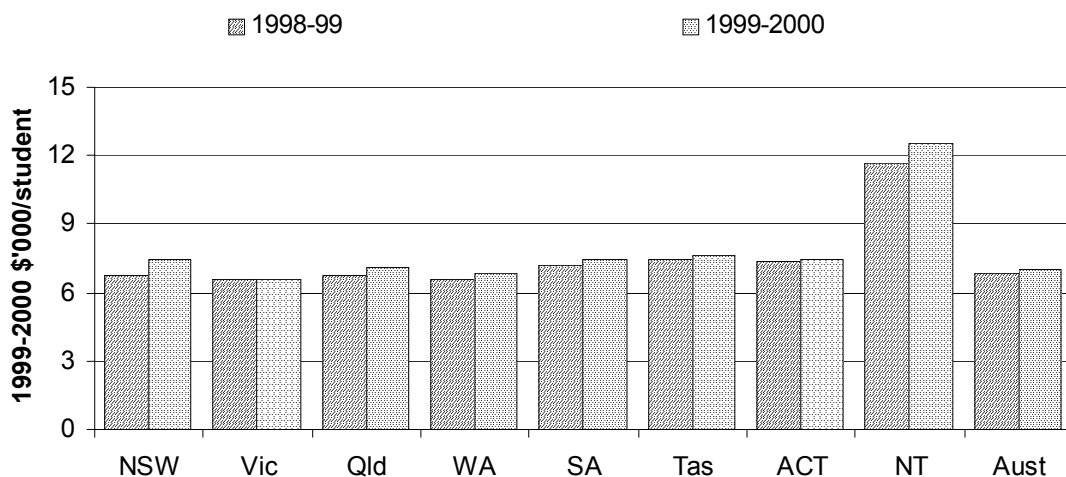


<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 3A.9 and 3A.10 for definitions and data caveats. <sup>b</sup> Capital charges have been excluded for comparability reasons.

Source: table 3A.10.

Figure 3.10 shows that total government expenditure per full time equivalent student in government schools increased (in real terms) between 1998-99 and 1999-2000 in all jurisdictions.

Figure 3.10 **Total government expenditure per full time equivalent student, government schools<sup>a, b, c</sup>**

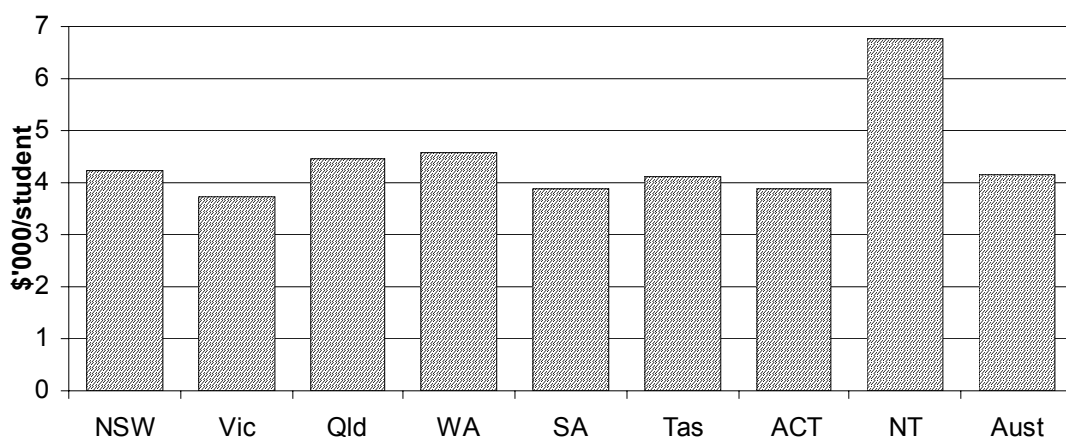


<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 3A.9 for definitions and data caveats. <sup>b</sup> Data for 1998-99 have been adjusted to 1999-2000 dollars using the gross domestic product deflator. <sup>c</sup> Capital charges have been excluded for comparability reasons.

Source: table 3A.11.

In 1999-2000, government expenditure per full time equivalent student in non-government schools in Australia ranged from \$6764 in the NT to \$3719 in Victoria (figure 3.11).

Figure 3.11 **Total government expenditure per full time equivalent student, non-government schools, 1999-2000<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> The sum of Commonwealth specific purpose payments for non-government schools, and State and Territory payments to non-government schools.

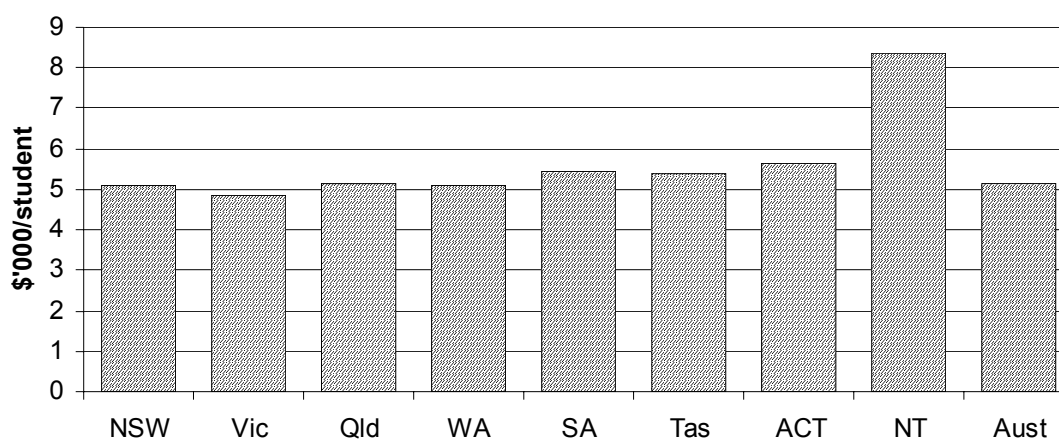
Source: table 3A.11.

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### *Staff expenditure per student*

Expenditure on staff is the major component of government expenditure on government schools, accounting for 69.4 per cent of the total in 1999-2000. Of this expenditure on staff, 81.3 per cent was expenditure on in-school teachers (table 3A.9). Government expenditure on staff per full time equivalent student ranged from \$8201 in the NT to \$4826 in Victoria (figure 3.12).

**Figure 3.12 Government expenditure on staff per full time equivalent student, government schools, 1999-2000**



Source: table 3A.10.

### *User cost of capital of school education*

The user cost of capital for government services is the cost of funds tied up in capital used to produce services (for example, land and buildings owned by government schools). The user cost of capital makes explicit the opportunity cost of using the funds to provide services rather than investing elsewhere or retiring debt.

When comparing costs of government services, it is important to account for the user cost of capital because:

- it is often a significant component of the cost of services; and
- it is often treated inconsistently (that is, it is included in the costs of services delivered by many non-government service providers, but effectively costed at zero for most budget sector agencies).

An indicative user cost of capital for government schools in 1999-2000 was calculated for all jurisdictions except the NT (which has yet to introduce accrual

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accounting). This was done by applying a nominal cost of capital rate of 8 per cent to the value of government assets used in the delivery of education in government schools. The indicative user cost of capital per full time equivalent government school student in 1999-2000 was highest in NSW (\$1780) and lowest in SA (\$654) (table 3A.11).

The Steering Committee accepts that asset valuation data are imperfect. However, it also recognises that the treatment of costs has not fully recognised the cost of public capital used by departments to deliver services — that is, capital has generally been considered ‘free’. This can lead to significant underestimation of costs for those services for which government capital is a major input. Thus, using an imperfect costing is preferable to not costing government capital and also provides an incentive to improve data over time.

### *Student-to-staff ratios*<sup>1</sup>

The student-to-teacher ratio presents the number of students per person classified as a teacher in a way that can be compared across jurisdictions. A low ratio means that there are a small number of students per teacher. (The ratio is not a measure of class size.) Table 3A.6 contains student-to-staff ratios for 2000.

The ratio needs to be interpreted with care because it can be affected by a number of factors, including:

- the proportion of small rural schools. A large proportion of small rural schools, for example, can significantly lower the overall average student-to-teacher ratio. Conversely, a large proportion of students in metropolitan schools can raise the ratio;
- the degree to which administrative work is undertaken by people classified as teachers (such as principals, deputy principals and senior teachers); and
- other inputs to school education (for example, non-teaching staff, computers, books and laboratory equipment).

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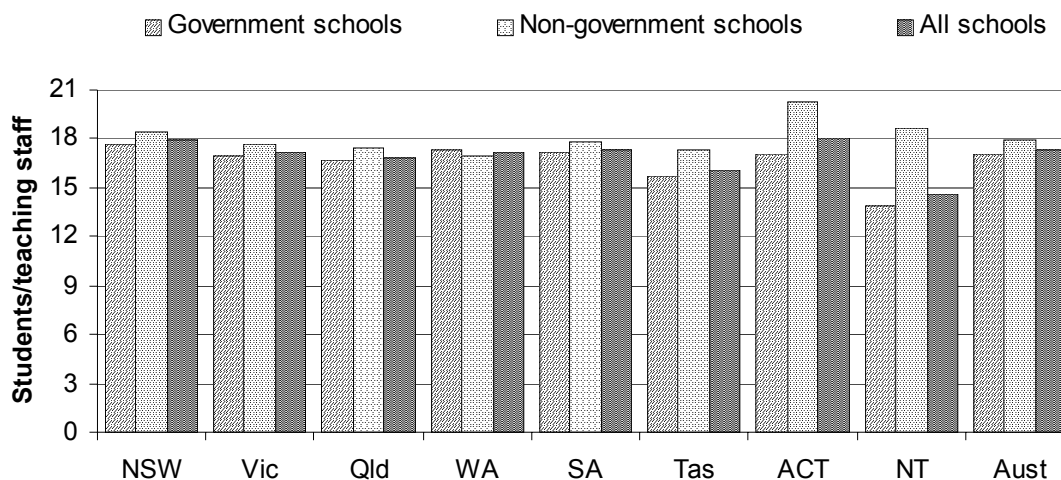
<sup>1</sup> Teaching staff have teaching duties (that is, they are engaged to impart the school curriculum) and spend the majority of their time in contact with students. They support students, either by direct class contact or on an individual basis. Teaching staff include principals, deputy principals and senior teachers mainly involved in administrative duties, but not specialist support staff (who may spend the majority of their time in contact with students but are not engaged to impart the school curriculum). Rather, the latter provide benefits to students or teaching staff in the development of the school curriculum. Full time equivalent students are defined as the sum of full time students and full time equivalent part time secondary students.

Interpretation of student-to-teacher ratios is usually accompanied by assumptions about efficiency and quality.

- A high ratio could indicate an efficient school system, because desired outputs are produced with a small number of inputs. However, lower inputs per unit of output indicate efficiency only when output units and outcomes are the same across all systems being compared. It is not possible to determine how changes in teaching staff numbers influence school outcomes until better indicators of those outcomes are available. There is no clear agreement in international literature that smaller class sizes necessarily improve outcomes.
- A low ratio could indicate a higher quality education system, if it is assumed that teachers have more time for each student. The ratio is not an indicator of class size; further, it does not reflect the quality, experience or qualifications of teachers. The ratio is also an aggregate across all subjects and year levels, so does not reflect the fact that a lower ratio may not be so important for certain subjects or year levels. Further, there is no clear agreement in international literature that smaller class sizes necessarily improve outcomes. It will not be possible to determine how different ratios influence quality in Australian schools until better indicators of school outcomes are available.

For primary schools in both government and non-government sectors combined, the ACT had the highest (18.0) student-to-teacher ratio and the NT had the lowest (14.6) (figure 3.13).

**Figure 3.13 Ratio of full time equivalent students to full time equivalent teaching staff, primary schools, 2000**

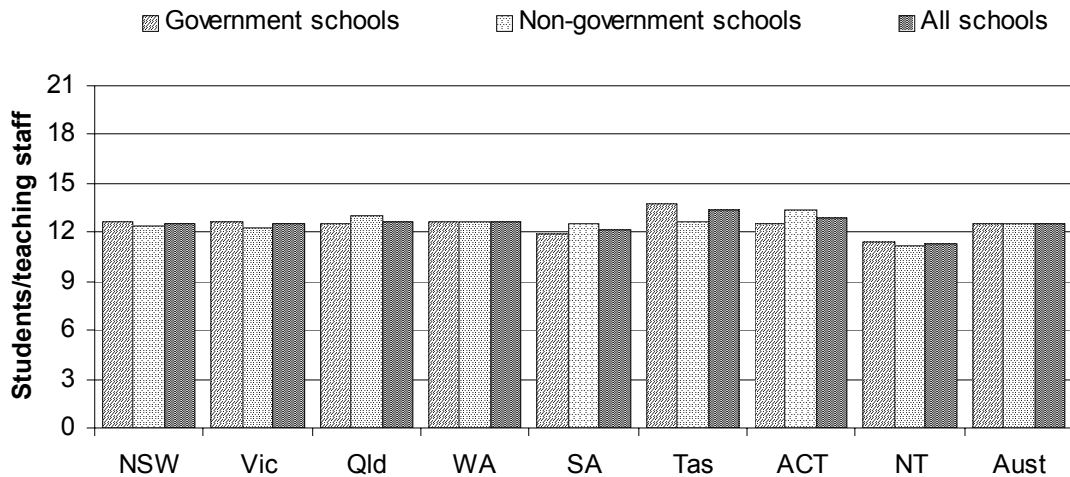


Source: table 3A.6.



For secondary schools in both government and non-government sectors combined, Tasmania had the most students per teacher in 2000 (13.4) and the NT had the least (11.3) (figure 3.14).

Figure 3.14 **Ratio of full time equivalent students to full time equivalent teaching staff, secondary schools, 2000**



Source: table 3A.6.

### *Student-to-non-teaching, in-school staff ratio<sup>2</sup>*

The ratio of full time equivalent students to full time equivalent non-teaching, in-school staff needs to be interpreted with care because it can be affected by:

- the amount of administrative work undertaken by staff nominally classified as teachers (such as principals, assistant principals and senior teachers);
- the proportion of administrative work undertaken outside the school (because administrative tasks such as personnel management are centralised in some jurisdictions but undertaken at the school level in others);
- the extent to which technology is applied to teaching, learning and school administration;
- the extent to which there are support staff in the class room setting; and
- the degree to which schools contract out services.

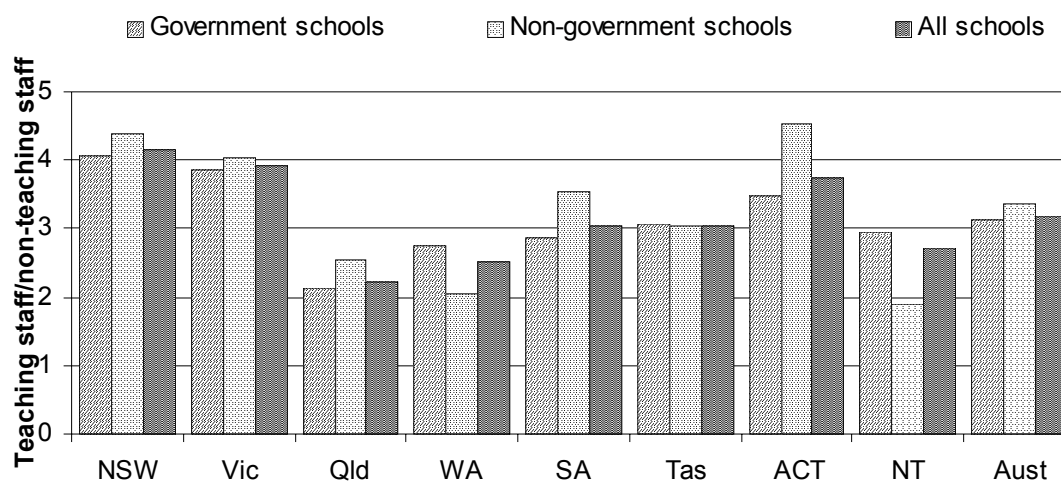
<sup>2</sup> Non-teaching staff include administrative and clerical staff (teacher aides and assistants who perform functions that are of benefit to students and teaching staff, including assisting in the development of school curriculum); building operations, general maintenance and other staff; and special support staff. In-school staff include staff who spend more than half their time actively engaged in duties in one or more schools.

For all schools, the ratio of students to non-teaching, in-school staff in 2000 ranged from 62.4 in NSW to 34.9 in Queensland (table 3A.6).

### *Teaching staff-to-non-teaching staff ratio*

For primary schools in both government and non-government sectors combined, NSW had the most number of teachers per non-teaching staff (4.1) and Queensland had the least (2.2) (figure 3.15).

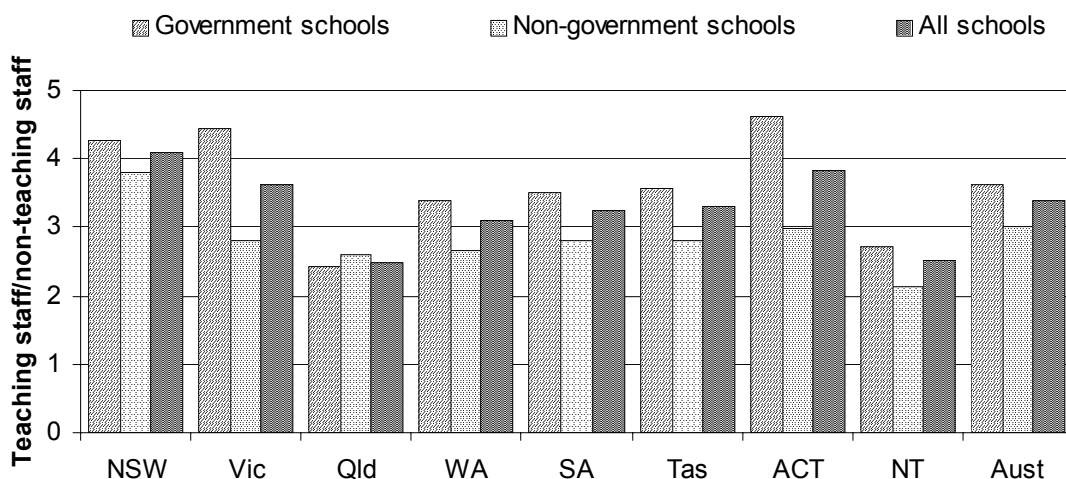
**Figure 3.15 Ratio of teaching staff to non-teaching, in-school staff, primary schools, 2000**



Source: table 3A.7.

For secondary schools in both government and non-government sectors combined, NSW had the highest ratio on 2000 (4.1) and Queensland and the NT had the lowest (2.5) (figure 3.16).

Figure 3.16 **Ratio of teaching staff to non-teaching, in-school staff, secondary schools, 2000**



Source: table 3A.7.

### 3.5 Future directions in performance reporting

#### Retention and participation rates

It is important that any measure of the extent to which students progress through the post-compulsory education system captures the impact of the significant changes that are occurring in the Australian education system. The participation and apparent retention rates reported in this Report may not reflect changes such as increased part time enrolments and moves to undertake post-compulsory schooling in TAFE institutes. During 2002, other measures, including new measures of participation and attainment developed by MCEETYA, will be examined.

#### Nationally comparable reporting of learning outcomes

The National Education Performance Monitoring Taskforce, under the auspices of MCEETYA, coordinated the development of definitions for, and approaches to, collecting nationally comparable data on performance indicators. This additional information will align with the performance indicator framework. While the taskforce completed its work at the end of 2001, the work will continue under a new taskforce, the Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce (PMRT), established by MCEETYA.

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### *Nationally consistent definitions*

Collecting nationally comparable data depends on, among other factors, nationally consistent definitions of groups against which educational achievement and outcomes can be reported. To date, education ministers have:

- endorsed national definitions for sex and Indigenous status; and
- agreed in principle to definitions of socioeconomic status, an approach to the measurement of language background, culture and ethnicity, and an approach to measurement of geographic location.

Progress has also been made towards the development of a common definition of, and approach to, the measurement of outcomes for students with disabilities.

### *Vocational education and training in schools*

Education ministers agreed in July 2001 on key measures for reporting on the performance of vocational education and training (VET) in schools. The PMRT is also developing further measures of attainment in VET in schools. Data are expected to be collected and reported annually from 2003.

### *Science*

Education ministers have agreed in principle to an approach to measuring student knowledge, skills in, and understanding of, science at primary school which involves a sample assessment of year 6 students every two or three years. This agreement is subject to assessment instruments and measures being trialed for consideration by ministers in the second half of 2002, with a view to data starting to be collected and published in 2003.

In 2000, a sample of school students aged 15 years participated in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Program for International Student Assessment, which provided internationally comparable indicators of student achievement in scientific literacy. Results from this study were published in December 2001.

### *Information and communications technology*

Education ministers have agreed in principle to data collection via an assessment of a national sample of students at two stages of schooling at years 5 or 6 and years 9 or 10, every two or three years. The PMRT will develop assessment instruments and

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key performance measures for consideration by ministers in the second half of 2002, with a view to a full assessment cycle taking place no later than 2003.

### *Civics and citizenship*

Ministers have endorsed a process of:

- collecting information on what can be expected of students in late primary and late compulsory schooling;
- developing draft key performance measures to monitor student learning outcomes; and
- trialing these measures to validate them before recommending a full national sample assessment.

A report on the outcomes of the process will be available in late 2001.

### *Enterprise education*

The PMRT will work with the Transition from School Taskforce on developing key performance measures and program measures for vocational learning and enterprise education.

## **3.6 Jurisdictions' comments**

This section provides comments from each jurisdiction on the services covered in this chapter and attachment 3A on the CD-ROM. Appendix A contains detailed statistics and short profiles on each State and Territory, which may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. The information covers aspects such as age profile, geographic distribution of the population, income levels, education levels, tenure of dwellings and cultural heritage (such as Indigenous and ethnic status).

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## Commonwealth Government comments

“ New Commonwealth funding arrangements for non-government schools were introduced in 2001. Under these arrangements need is assessed according to a measure of the socioeconomic status of a school’s community rather than a school’s own resource levels.

Under the new arrangements, the lower the socioeconomic status of a school’s students, the higher the funding received from the Commonwealth Government. Funding ranges from 13.7 per cent of average government school recurrent costs to 70 per cent, which is 14 per cent higher than the previous maximum funding rate for primary schools.

The Commonwealth has guaranteed that schools will not be financially disadvantaged by the introduction of the new arrangements by guaranteeing maintenance of the 2000 funding levels for those schools that would have received less funding under the socioeconomic measure.

Stronger reporting and accountability arrangements have been introduced for Commonwealth schools funding for the quadrennium 2001–04. Under the *States Grants (Primary and Secondary Education Assistance) Act 2000*, all education authorities are required, as a condition of funding from 2001, to make a commitment to the *National Goals for Schooling in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Authorities are also called on as a condition of funding to make a commitment to achieve any performance measures, including targets, incorporated in the legislation. These commitments form part of the funding agreements between the Commonwealth and each authority.

Performance targets and measures may be determined by the Commonwealth Minister and incorporated into the legislation through regulations, though wherever possible national targets and measures would be agreed by State and Commonwealth education ministers through MCEETYA. Reporting takes place through the *Annual National Report on Schooling in Australia* (the ANR).

The first targets, now incorporated in the Act through regulations, are that all year 3 students will meet the national benchmarks in reading, writing, spelling and in numeracy each year.

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## **New South Wales Government comments**

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There were many highlights in 2000 as a consequence of the substantial involvement of the Department of Education and Training in Olympic and Paralympic Games-related events. Around 90 000 students from the State's city and country public schools were directly involved in test events such as the Pacific School Games, official venue openings or special Olympic functions in the lead-up to the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Approximately 6500 students performed in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Hundreds of teachers acted as trainers, chaperones, backstage production crew and stage management crew at both events.

There was a continued focus on literacy and numeracy through the implementation of the State Literacy and Numeracy Plan with a particular focus in 2000 on the writing aspect of literacy. Through State-wide testing in the Basic Skills Tests (BST) in the primary years and the English Language and Literacy Assessment (ELLA) in the secondary years, the department was able to measure and provide to schools and parents quality student performance data in the key areas of literacy and numeracy. The performance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) students shows that as a group their average gain in Basic Skills Test scores since 1996 matches that of the State as a whole. NSW years 3 and 5 students achieved high levels of performance on the national benchmarks.

Significant progress was made to improve the quality of secondary educational provision by developing new multi-campus colleges that take advantage of partnership opportunities between schools, TAFE and university institutions.

There was continued expansion of opportunities for secondary students to undertake vocational education and training (VET) courses. One in three senior school students studied a VET course as part of the Higher School Certificate. More than 13 000 students were involved in the School-to-Work Program, with significant expansion planned for 2001 on the basis of the program's success. This program focuses on the needs of students as they prepare to make the transition from school to further education, training or employment.

In 2001–02 the Government will continue to build for the future through record expenditure on quality education and training. Total recurrent and capital funding for schools is \$6 billion, up 6.2 per cent on last year's budget. There will be a major commitment to improving education facilities through increased funding for capital works and school maintenance.

Administrative costs in NSW remain among the lowest in Australia.

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## Victorian Government comments

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The aim of school education is for all students to leave school literate, numerate and socially skilled, and progress to further education and employment. To achieve this, the Government recognises the importance of a robust, well-resourced public education and training system linked to social and economic development goals. To this end, the 2000-01 State Budget allocated an additional \$258 million to schools for the 2001 school year. A further \$654 million was allocated to promote excellence and innovation in government school education in the 2001-02 State Budget brought down in May 2001.

The Government's goals are quantified in three crucial targets, namely: by 2005 Victorian primary students will be at or above the national benchmarks for reading, writing and numeracy; by 2010 90 per cent of young people will complete year 12 or its equivalent; and by 2005 there will be a 6 per cent rise in the percentage of young people aged 15–19 in rural and regional Victoria engaged in education and training.

Significant progress towards the achievement of the first target has already been made, with 93.0 per cent of Victorian students at year 3 in 2000 performing at or above the national benchmarks in reading. Initiatives in early years numeracy will lift numeracy learning in government primary schools to the same high standards attained through the literacy program.

Victoria's apparent retention rate for the year 2000 for students from years 7 to 12 was 77.2 per cent, which was above the national average of 72.3 per cent. Similarly, the level of participation in schooling of 15–19 year olds was higher than the national average and the highest of any State or Territory (except the ACT). Together with the further growth in the number of students participating in the VET in Schools program and additional places for apprentices, these indicators, although not actually measuring completion rates, signal the positive progress the Government is making towards achieving its completion target.

Initiatives implemented to support the third target include the Managed Individual Pathways program, which aims to provide one-to-one support for students in the post-compulsory years, Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENS) and Precincts. The LLENS bring together all relevant providers and employer representatives at the local level in order to maximise employment and training outcomes for students. Precincts will provide broad options and alternative pathways for students.

In terms of assistance for students with special needs, the Victorian Government has supported over 100 locally based projects through regional Koorie educational committees. Additionally, in 2001 approximately \$25.3 million was allocated to primary and secondary schools for the provision of English as a Second Language programs and 237.3 full time equivalent multicultural aides were allocated across all sectors of the school system. Funding is also provided through the School Global Budget for students with special learning needs with an additional \$35 million being committed over four years.

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## Queensland Government comments

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Education Queensland's vision is for all Queensland students to become active citizens in a learning society: the Smart State.

In April 2000, Queensland State Education – 2010 was adopted by Government as the strategic response to the broad economic and social change. The strategy is based on research undertaken in Queensland and reflects the views about the future expressed by people involved in public education in Queensland. The purpose of education in Queensland is to create a safe, tolerant and disciplined environment within which young people prepare to be active and reflective Australian citizens with a disposition to lifelong learning. They will be able to participate in and shape community, economic and political life in Queensland and the nation. They will be able to engage confidently with other cultures at home and abroad

The first stage initiatives for implementing Queensland State Education – 2010 have commenced. The Secondary Schools Renewal Program, a \$114 million, three-year commitment, will reinvigorate secondary school as part of the move towards establishing distinctive State schools. The New Basics, a new approach to teaching and learning that focuses on essential areas of learning, is being trialled in 38 schools.

Strategies to maximise student learning continue to be implemented. Learning Technology grants totalling more than \$22 million were provided to schools for maintenance and purchase of computers, training and software. A comprehensive review of literacy teaching in Queensland state schools was conducted and the report launched in November. It complements and builds on the already significant achievements of schools in improving literacy standards.

Interest in vocational subjects continued to grow, broadening the career opportunities of all students, especially those who might leave school early. In 2000, 61 per cent of students in State secondary schools were studying at least one vocational subject. More than 2200 students combined schoolwork with an apprenticeship.

Confidence in public schools is an important indicator as to whether schools are providing what the public want. The majority of parents rated their school a good school and indicated satisfaction with their child's progress at school. The demand for school places continues to increase as a result of Queensland's high population growth rate, which has tapered but remains the highest in the country, at 1.6 per cent after account is taken of interstate movements.

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## Western Australian Government comments

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Following the State election in February 2001, the new Minister for Education made clear the Government's view of the importance of school education and its determination to introduce a range of reforms to ensure that public schools offered a world-class education to all Western Australians, with the following objectives:

- students who are more literate and numerate;
- students who stay at school longer;
- students and staff who enjoy better learning environments;
- students who learn from teachers who know how best they learn;
- teachers who are held in respect by the community; and
- students who are able to use quality information technology to learn about their world.

This determination to improve the image and quality of government schooling was demonstrated by the Minister's decision to establish an immediate review of the provision of resources and services to government schools. Chaired by Professor Alan Robson, Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Western Australia, the review made a range of recommendations for achieving these objectives.

The *School Education Act 1999* and Regulations 2000 came into force. They are the most significant legislative changes affecting school education in Western Australia in more than 70 years.

A later starting age for kindergarten students was introduced, creating a new cohort of older students who will be able to undertake thirteen years of education and aligning this State more closely with other Australian jurisdictions, while at the same time improving provisions in early childhood education: from 2001, only children whose fourth birthday falls on or before 30 June are eligible to enter K programs. Western Australia is the only State that provides universal access to government-funded kindergarten and pre-primary programs

In August 2001, 70.2 per cent of all school students in Western Australia attended government schools. There were 252 784 students, compared with 261 286 in August 2000: 28 488 kindergarten and pre-primary, 142 527 primary and 81 769 secondary. The one-off reduction in enrolments was due to this change to the age of entry to kindergarten.

Schools continued to progress successfully through the Curriculum Improvement Program (CIP), which involves implementation of the Curriculum Framework by 2004 and implementation of the Outcomes and Standards Framework, of which the Student Outcome Statements are the major part, by 2005.

There were 19 200 computers in primary schools (one per eight students) and 15 100 in secondary schools (one per five students).

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## South Australian Government comments

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The Department of Education, Training and Employment provides for a range of services including children's services, education (preschools and schools), vocational education and training, youth and employment. At the end of 2000 the department employed 14 545 teachers in government schools of which 88.8 per cent were permanent employees with 11.2 per cent having temporary employment status.

During 2000, Partnerships 21, a local management model specific to South Australia, was implemented in government schools and preschools on a voluntary basis. By the end of the year it featured in approximately 75 per cent of schools and preschools.

The South Australian Curriculum, Standards and Accountability framework, which provides for curriculum continuity and reporting against standards from birth to year 12, was launched in November 2000. It is organised around eight learning areas in which essential learnings, equity cross-curriculum perspectives and enterprise and vocational education are interwoven. The four bands for the early, primary, middle and senior years, describe the curriculum scope and standards for learners in each group.

The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2000–2005 was launched in October to support improved literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students, in the early to post compulsory years. In 2000 a total of 12 677 year 3 students and 12 828 year 5 students participated in the Basic Skills Test in aspects of literacy and numeracy. This represented a steady rise from 81 per cent when the test started in 1995 to 98 per cent in 2000. The marked growth from 1998 to 1999 (up by 6 per cent) was maintained in year 3 literacy, this was also reflected in the year 5 Aboriginal students literacy performance. International student enrolments in secondary schools continued their upward rise throughout 2000 with the total figure for term 4 being 438 students, a 62 per cent increase on 1999 figures.

Improved pathways for young people to undertake education and training are supported by the Vocational Education in Schools Strategy. VET in Schools provides parity of esteem for vocational education and accredited courses of study, enabling young people undertaking VET to have their course included in their TER. School-to-work transitions for young people at the local level were supported through the establishment of 19 regional partnerships across South Australia. A total of \$10 million was approved through the strategy for disbursement over a three-year period for Regional Networks.

The new Education Development Centre, a \$12.8 million State initiative, commenced operations in 2000 to provide the latest technology and professional training and development. The Technology School of the Future, on site with the Centre, supports seamless learning opportunities for student and adults. A Pathways framework was developed to support staff gaining tertiary accredited qualifications. Educational leadership is supported by the Centre for Leaders through workshops, online programs, tertiary accredited courses and master classes in a range of areas.

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## Tasmanian Government comments

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The Tasmanian Department of Education is responsible for the provision of public education, vocational education and training, information and library and archive services throughout the State. In addition, it is responsible for the regulation and licensing of child care and provision of policy advice across Government on youth affairs. This allows for development of highly integrated strategies across the delivery of services to children and young people and a focus on developing a culture of lifelong learning.

During 2000 the Minister for Education launched a vision for education, training and information titled Learning Together. This plan contains a vision for the public education, training and information system in Tasmania with underpinning values and goals. It sets out a comprehensive set of initiatives designed to realise the goals with a set of indicators that will be used to measure progress towards the stated goals. Two major areas for action within the plan were a comprehensive review of the Tasmanian school curriculum and the continuing development of strategies to enhance the use of ICT in teaching and learning.

The process of curriculum review has been initiated through a comprehensive Curriculum Consultation. A broad consultation process was established engaging many individuals and groups in the discussion of what the Tasmanian school system stands for. The outcome, a Statement of Values and Purposes, was launched in December 2000. This statement made clear the values that should underpin the provision of education and the purposes that should be served by our learning and curriculum frameworks. It established a platform of belief that will significantly affect decisions about content, teaching and assessment.

The continuing development of ICT in teaching and learning was strengthened through the establishment of a Centre of Excellence in Online Learning. The Centre of Excellence in Online Learning has a key role in leading and supporting the development of online learning throughout the State. Services provided by the Centre include:

- provision of professional learning relating to the application of ICT to teaching and learning;
- promotion of online learning as a teaching and learning tool and the increasing provision of on-line learning;
- the development of a network of Innovation Schools throughout the State to develop innovative practices in the integration of online services and online learning modules into classroom practice;
- development of research programs focused on ICT in teaching and learning; and
- the coordination and facilitation of the development of online learning materials and services.

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## Australian Capital Territory Government comments

“ The ACT Department of Education and Community Services is responsible for school and vocational education, children’s, family, youth, sport and recreational services. The provision of government school education is part of the seamless provision of services to children and youth in the ACT.

A significant development was the implementation of a professional appraisal program for principals, to align professional performance with system and school strategic directions, within an accountability and continuous improvement framework.

The High Schools for the New Millennium Project is now in its second year. The three year project is addressing the needs and priorities for a new generation of ACT public high schools.

Drug education remains a high priority. Partnerships with parents/carers and community organisations continue to be strengthened through the Drug Education Framework for ACT Government Schools (1999), the National School Drug Education Strategy (1999), the Drug Education Project for School Communities in the ACT and Local School Community Drug Summits.

The department has achieved stronger connection with the Indigenous community following two Indigenous Education Forums in August 2000. The forums initiated the development of an Indigenous Compact between the department and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The compact aims to improve education outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. An Indigenous teacher has joined the Literacy and Numeracy Team to assist teachers in continuing to improve the performance of Indigenous students in the early years of schooling. The Consultation Draft Strategic Plan 2001–04 Services to Indigenous People, released in April 2001, outlines the department’s commitment to improving services and outcomes for Indigenous children, young people and their families.

Information technology continues to be a high priority for the department. The appointment of the Chief Information Officer has provided strategic vision and direction for the next phase of IT development. This direction includes access to the corporate intranet by all staff at work and at home.

Work commenced on: the ACT Government Schools Plan 2002–04 to provide the department with a cohesive framework to improve services and outcomes for all students in ACT government schools; and Within Reach of Us All: Action Plan for the Achievement of Educational Success for All Students 2002–04, a framework for all students to complete a meaningful education to the end of year 12.

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## Northern Territory Government comments

“ The Northern Territory Department of Education continues to focus on the particular needs of a vastly distributed student population, including the unique needs of Indigenous students. The department has identified as a particular focus, the provision of educational services to secondary aged Indigenous students. The NT has 1022 secondary aged Indigenous students enrolled in schools other than secondary schools. In the year 2000 the Northern Territory recorded 33 258 full time equivalent enrolments in government schools. This continues to be the highest proportion of students enrolled in government schools in Australia, with no indications that this proportion will change significantly in the near future. The NT has 79 per cent of students in government schools compared to a national average of 69 per cent. In primary school 42 per cent of our student population is Indigenous.

The NT continues to face significant challenges delivering educational services to Indigenous students and non-indigenous students in remote locations. These challenges are being met in part through the use of information and communication technology and the development of a new curriculum framework.

The Learning and Technology in Schools (LATIS) program aims to bring to all Territory schools a minimum standard of connectivity and with reasonable access to the world wide web. The program has provided information and communication technology infrastructure to schools, where in many cases it may not have been available. This technology brings with it significant opportunities to ‘add value’ to the educational process both educationally and administratively. Students attending remotely located schools make up 26.7 per cent of all students —government and non-government — in the NT. These students attend 54 per cent of our schools. Small, remote schools are a feature of the NT educational landscape. LATIS as a program aims to reduce the divide between technology rich and poor locations, by providing equipment and training enabling a standard level of access to information technology and internet connection.

Along with the LATIS program the Northern Territory has made significant progress in developing an NT outcomes focused curriculum framework to enable better reporting of student outcomes and to guide teacher programming.

Improving national benchmark achievement levels continues to be a priority target for the NT. In 2000, 81 per cent the Territory’s year 3 non-Indigenous students and 26 per cent of the Indigenous students at the year 3 level achieved the national benchmark for reading. For year 5, 86 per cent of the non-Indigenous students and 34 per cent of the Indigenous students achieved the national benchmark for reading.

For mathematics, 95 per cent of the Territory’s non-Indigenous year 3 students and 48 per cent of the year 3 level Indigenous students achieved the national benchmark. At the year 5 level, 89 per cent of the non-Indigenous students and 37 per cent of the Indigenous students achieved the national benchmark for mathematics.”

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## 3.7 Definitions

Data for this chapter were sourced from *Schools Australia* (ABS 2001a), the *National Schools Statistics Collection* (MCEETYA 2001b), unpublished Commonwealth, State and Territory governments data, and unpublished DETYA data. More information on definitions and explanatory notes can be found in *National Schools Statistics Collection (Government Schools Sector) Notes Instructions and Tabulations 2000* (ABS 2001b).

Table 3.9 Terms

Term	Definition
Apparent retention rates	The percentage of full time students who continued to year 12 in 2000 from respective cohort groups at year 10. The rate is calculated by dividing the total number of full time students in year 12 in 2000 by the sum of full time students in year 10 in 1998.
Average expenditure per full time equivalent student	Total expenditure (excluding capital charges) divided by the total number of full time equivalent students. It is based on the <i>National School Statistics Collection</i> definitions (MCEETYA 2001b). Expenditure figures are in financial years and student numbers are in calendar years, so the total number of students is taken as the average of two years. When calculating 1999-2000 average expenditure per student, for example, the total expenditure figure is at 1999-2000 but the total student number figure is the average of student numbers from 1999 and 2000.
Full time equivalent student	The full time equivalent of a full time student is 1.0. The method of converting part time student numbers into full time equivalents should be based on the student's workload compared with the workload usually undertaken by a full time student.
Full time student	A person who satisfies the definition of a student and undertakes a workload equivalent to, or greater than, that usually undertaken by a student of that year level. The definition of full time student varies across jurisdictions.
Indigenous student	A student of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or as being from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background. Administrative processes for determining Indigenous status varies across jurisdictions.
Language background other than English (LBOTE)	Administrative processes for determining LBOTE status varies across jurisdictions.

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**Table 3.9 (Continued)**

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Locality	<p>Where a school is located (either in a metropolitan or nonmetropolitan area) based on the jurisdiction's own definitions/classifications. In this Report, the definitions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• capital city, as defined by the former Department of Primary Industry and Energy (DPIE);</li> <li>• other metropolitan as defined by the former DPIE;</li> <li>• rural centres (the summation of large and small rural centres), as defined by the former DPIE; and</li> <li>• other rural and remote centres (the summation of other rural areas, remote centres and other remote areas), as defined by the former DPIE.</li> </ul> <p>Further classifications are: capital city and other metropolitan as urban; large rural centres, small rural centres and other rural as rural; and other remote as remote.</p> <p>Metropolitan may be defined as capital city and other metropolitan, while nonmetropolitan may be defined as rural centres and other rural and remote areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital cities consists of State and Territory capital city statistical divisions.</li> <li>• Other metropolitan centres consist of one or more statistical subdivisions that have an urban centre of population of 100 000 or more.</li> <li>• Large rural centres are statistical local areas where most of the population resides in urban centres of population of 25 000 or more.</li> <li>• Small rural centre are statistical local areas in rural zones that contain urban centres of population of between 10 000 and 24 999.</li> <li>• Other rural areas are the remaining statistical local areas within the rural zone.</li> <li>• Remote centres are statistical local areas in the remote zone that contain urban centres of population of 5000 or more.</li> <li>• Other remote areas are the remaining statistical local areas within the remote zone.</li> </ul>
Part time student	A student undertaking a workload that is less than that specified as being full time in their jurisdiction.
Participation (15–19 years)	Number of full time students of a particular age and sex, expressed as a proportion in government schools of a particular age group, multiplied by the published participation rate for all schools of that particular age group.
Potential year 12 population	An estimate of a single year age group which could have participated in year 12 that year, defined as: the estimated resident population aged 15–19 years divided by 5.
Real expenditure	Nominal expenditure adjusted for changes in prices, using the GDP(E) price deflator and expressed in terms of final year prices.
Socioeconomic status	Administrative processes for determining socioeconomic status varies across jurisdictions.

(Continued on next page)



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**Table 3.9 (Continued)**

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<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Source of income	Income from a level of government as a percentage of total government expenditure. Income in this Report may come from any of the three levels of government: Commonwealth, State and Territory, and local governments. Commonwealth expenditure is derived from specific purpose payments (current and capital) for government schools. This funding indicates the level of monies allocated, not necessarily the level of expenditure incurred in any given financial year. The data provide, therefore, only a broad indication of the level of Commonwealth funding.
Staff	Full time equivalent of staff who are generally active in government schools and ancillary education establishments.
Student-to-staff ratios	Number of full time equivalent students per full time equivalent teaching and non-teaching staff. Students at special schools are allocated to primary and secondary. The full time equivalent of staff includes those who are generally active in government schools and ancillary education establishments.
Student	Full time student only. A student is a person who is formally (officially) enrolled or registered at a school, and who is also active in a primary, secondary or special education program at that school. Students at special schools are allocated to primary and secondary on the basis of age, unless otherwise identified.
Student, primary	Student in primary education, which covers pre-year 1 to year 6 in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT, pre-year 1 to year 7 in WA, SA and the NT, and year 1 to year 7 in Queensland.
Student, secondary	Student in secondary education, which commences at year 7 in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT, and at year 8 in Queensland, SA, WA and the NT.
Students with disabilities	Students included in the annual system reports to DETYA. The definitions of students with disabilities are based on individual State criteria, so data are not comparable across jurisdictions.

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